

A Tether is Better!

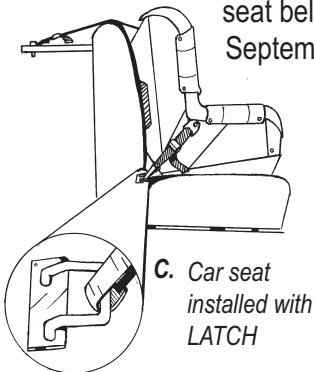
Tethering your child's car seat

**Child
Safety
Facts
2005**

What is a tether?

A tether (top strap) holds the top of a car seat (child safety seat) to the vehicle (A). Most forward-facing car seats sold in the U.S. and Canada come with tethers. Tethers also are used with safety vests and seats with harnesses for children over 40 pounds. Tether anchors are installed in all vehicles made since the 2000 model year. They can be added in many older vehicles.

A tether is also part of a new system called “**Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children**” (LATCH). LATCH connects a car seat to the vehicle without using a seat belt (C). All vehicles and car seats have LATCH starting in September 2002 (2003 model year). (See the vehicle manual.)



A tether adds extra protection

In a severe crash, a tether limits the child's motion (A, B). This lessens the chance of serious head and neck injuries. However, if a tether cannot be used, a car seat that is tightly installed with only a seat belt can do a good job. A booster seat does not need a tether, since the lap-shoulder belt holds the child if a crash occurs.

When should I tether my child's car seat?

- Whenever the car seat has a tether and the vehicle has an anchor.
- In vehicles where there is very little space in the back seat.
- If the seat belt does not hold your child's seat firmly in place.

A tether has two parts:



Tether symbol

1. **On car seats: a strap with a hook.** For most older seats, you can order a kit from the manufacturer.
2. **In vehicles: an anchor.** In newer vehicles, it is installed at the factory. It may be marked with the symbol at the left. For an older vehicle, order an anchor kit from a car dealer (see back).

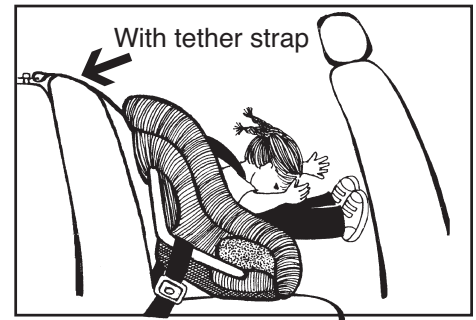
Use only the kits made for your car seat and your vehicle.

Does my vehicle have tether anchors?

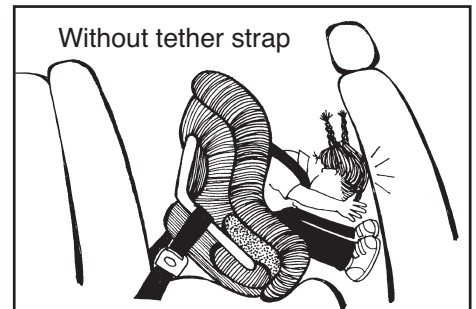
Most 2000 and newer passenger cars have at least two tether anchors. All 2001 and later vans, SUVs, and pickups also have anchors. Read about tethers in the vehicle owner's manual. (Look under Top Tether or Child Restraints.)

Anchors do not all look the same. They may be bars, brackets, rings, or webbing loops. Some may look like cargo tie-down hooks but not all hooks are strong enough. Many are under covers (see the tether symbol).

Some earlier vehicles also have anchors installed. Anchor kits are available for most others (see back). **Only use the anchor locations recommended by the vehicle manufacturer.**



A. Car seat with tether in a severe crash. Seat belt, tether, and harness work together to keep the child's head out of danger.



B. Car seat without tether in a severe crash. During a high-speed crash, especially in a vehicle with a small passenger space, the child's head could hit something. He could be seriously injured.

Getting a tether strap for a child's car seat

If your child's forward-facing car seat did not come with a tether, call the car seat manufacturer for a kit. Some older car seats cannot be tethered. If a tether strap kit is not made for your child's seat, do not try to make your own tether.

Most boosters and rear-facing car seats do not use tethers.

*Make
Every Ride
A Safe Ride*



Finding a tether anchor or a place to install one

- **Sedan:** in the shelf (filler panel) behind the back seat (D).
- **Station wagon or hatchback:** in the cargo area (E), on the back of the seat, or above or below the rear door.
- **Van:** on the back or bottom of the seat or in the floor of the cargo area. Rarely, a seat belt in the row behind may be an anchor.
- **Pickup truck:** in the back wall of the cab behind the seat back.

Installing a tether anchor kit in an older vehicle

Check your vehicle owner's manual first. It may tell you where to install the kit (anchor point location). Most vehicles have at least two anchor points.

Many cars, vans, SUVs, and trucks made from 1989 to 2000–01 have holes drilled for anchors. Many 1986–88 cars have anchor points that are not drilled. A few vehicles made before 1986 have anchor points.

The owner's manual may have details about installing the anchor kit. Order the correct kit from the dealership. If the parts department does not know about tethers, they usually can find information in service manuals and dealers' parts catalogs.

Some tether anchors are easy to install, especially if the hole is drilled and has a welded nut. Others may require the use of special tools. Most Ford, General Motors, Chrysler, and Volkswagen/Audi dealers will put in a tether anchor at no charge. Some other dealers also may provide this at no charge.

If a tether anchor kit is not available for an older vehicle, you may be able to install a generic anchor kit from the car seat manufacturer. For more help, contact a certified child passenger safety technician at a car seat inspection station (see Resources).

Installing an anchor yourself:

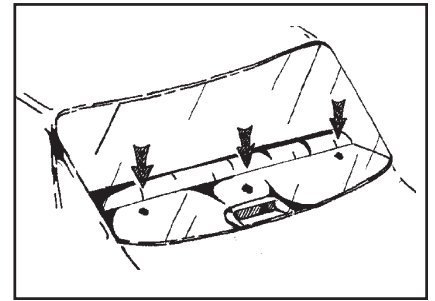
- Follow instructions in your owner's manual or in the anchor kit. These should tell exactly where and how to install the anchor.
- In some cases, you must drill the hole and screw a nut onto the tether bolt from underneath (E). In others, the nut is welded under the hole, so the bolt is easy to install.
- **WARNING:** Never force a bolt into a welded nut. If the bolt is the wrong size, it will damage the nut. Use **ONLY** the correct kit.

Who can help me install a tether anchor?

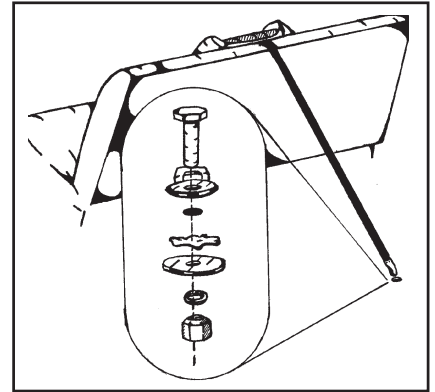
Call your vehicle dealership, body shop, or local mechanic. Not all service people know about installing tethers. Refer them to vehicle service manuals or to the "LATCH/Tether Manual" (see Resources).

Can I use a tether for a rear-facing car seat?

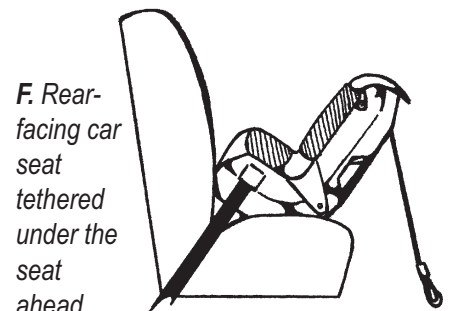
Use a tether for a car seat facing the rear **only** if the instructions tell you it is okay. One company (Britax) sells a few car seat models with tethers for rear-facing use. Usually a rear-facing tether can be anchored to a strong, non-movable part of the metal frame of the vehicle seat ahead (F) rather than to a regular tether anchor. Follow the car seat instructions.



D. Anchor locations behind the rear seat of a sedan



E. Installing a tether anchor kit in a station wagon cargo area



Do this only if approved by the car seat manufacturer

Resources:

Car Seat Questions

National Auto Safety Hotline:
888-DASH-2-DOT, 800-424-9153 (tty) or
www.nhtsa.dot.gov

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. Helpline:
800-745-SAFE (7233) Spanish, 800-747-SANO (7266); or www.carseat.org

To find a Car Seat Inspection Station near you

www.seatcheck.org or
866-SEATCHECK (732-8243)

Reference book: LATCH: Lower Anchors and Tethers for Child Restraints, Safe Ride News Publications; installation manual with vehicle anchor part numbers. Order from SRN Publications, 800-422-4121 or www.saferidenews.com